Some Oligosemic Problems in Translating the Glorious Qur'an into English

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1. ABSTRACT:

The present study concentrates on the phenomenon of Oligosemy. It considers Oligosemy in certain holy verses of the Glorious Quran. It includes four sections: Section 1 introduces the abstract, while section two deals with the introduction. Section three deals with the analysis and discussion of certain texts, while section four deals with the conclusion.

2. INTRODUCTION:

The Glorious Quran is the superior source of rhetoric in Arabic. It is also the only unique reference for linguistics including all fields of linguistics: oligosemy, meronomy, homonomy, grammar and so on. All linguistic Arabic references get their information from this holy book. In other words, it is the source of standard Arabic and the key to this language. Other languages do not have any superior reference which may be consulted.

In this study, we have tried to clarify one semantic phenomenon, oligosemy, which means the narrowing of the meaning. Oligosemy comprises two morphemes; the first one is oligo – which means to narrow the extension of the meaning and the other morpheme is – semy, which is derived from semantics (Ilyas, 1989, 117 – 120). We have not covered all the phenomena which represent oligosemy, but only some since it is impossible for any linguist to cover any phenomenon completely. Finally, we would like to encourage others to complete further research this important area.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF CERTAIN TEXTS:

We have chosen the following holy verses and three translation levels:

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 1

1. ﴿إِنَّ ٱلصَّفَا وَٱلْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَآئِرِ ٱللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ ٱلْبَيْتَ أَوِ ٱعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا﴾.
(البقرة: 158)

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 1

1. Verily, Al-safa and Al-marwah (two mountains in Makka) are of the symbols of Allah. So it is not a sin on him who performs Hajj or Umrah (pilgrimage) of the house (the Ka'bah at Makka) to perform the going (tawaf). (Al-hilaly and Khan, 45).
2. Lo ! (the mountains) Al-safa and Al-marwah are among indications of Allah. It is therefore no sin for him who on pilgrimage to the house (of God) or visiteth it to go around them (as the pagan custom is). (Pickthall, 24).
3. Behold ! Safa and Al-marwah are among the symbols of God, so if those who visit the house in the season or at other times should compass them around. It is no sin in them. (Ali, 62)

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D,vol-II, 883) Al-Umrah العمرة is performed by Muslims throughout the year and Pilgrimage is performed one time during the year, but Al-nasafy (2000,88) states that Al-itimar الاعتمار means the visit, while Al-shawkani (1994, vol-I, 596) illustrates that "Al-umrah العمرة means the visit".

Ibn kathir (1990, vol-I, 219) says that Al-umrah is performed throughout the year except the months of Pilgrimage.

COMMENTS:

According to our view, Al-hilaly and Khan have not conveyed the meaning of Al-umrah العمرة , they have used phonological translation, therefore, they did not allow the English reader capture the right meaning.

Pickthall has captured the meaning but partially because he has not determined the time of the visit; the verb “visiteth” should have been modified by an adverb of time.

Ali has captured the meaning perfectly.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

Verily, Al-safa and Al-marwah (two mountains in Mecca) are two of Allah’s symbols. He who makes pilgrimage or visits the house of Allah at any other time including piligrimage time, is of no sin if he compasses around them.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 2

2. ﴿وَٱنظُرۡ إِلَى ٱلۡعِظَامِ كَيۡفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكۡسُوهَا لَحۡمٗاۚ﴾. (البقرة: 259).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 2

1. Look at the bones, how we bring them together and cloth them with flesh. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 74).
2. Look at the bones, how we adjust them and then cover them with flesh. (Pickthall, 41).
3. Look further at the bones, how we bring them together and cloth them with flesh. (Ali, 105).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D,vol-III, 637) this term (nashaza) means picking up the bones and then reconstructing them, while Al-nasafy

(2000,135) states that this term means setting up the bones to each other, but Al-shawkani (1994, vol. I, 351) says that it means to set the bones to each other. Ibn Kathir (1990, vol. I, 297) illustrates the meaning of it as putting the bones in their right places.

COMMENTS:

All the translators have captured the meaning perfectly.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

Do observe the bones, how we reconstruct them, then cloth them with flesh.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 3

3. ﴿يَظُنُّونَ بِٱللَّهِ غَيۡرَ ٱلۡحَقِّ ظَنَّ ٱلۡجَٰهِلِيَّةِۖ﴾. (آل عمران: 154).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 3

1. And thought wrongly of Allah – the thought of ignorance. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 114).
2. Thought wrongly of Allah, the thought of ignorance. (Pickthall, 66).
3. Moved by wrong suspicions of god – suspicions due to ignorance. (Ali, 162).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol-I, 524) Al-jahiliyah الجاهلية means the period of no-Islam existence. While Al-nasafy (2000, 192) states that “Zan Al-jahiliyah ظن الجاهلية” means the thought that belongs to pre-Islamic period. Also Al-shawkani (1994, vol-I, 493) says that Zan Al-jahiliyah ظن الجاهلية means the thought of pre-Islamic people, but Ibn kathir (1990, vol-I, 395) says that Zan Al-jahiliyah ظن الجاهلية means doubtful people about God.

COMMENTS:

All the translators have not captured the meaning of Al-jahiliyah because Al-jahiliyah is not the equivalence of ignorance, but it is the period of time which had preceded Al-Islam, so the English reader can not capture the meaning of this term even partially.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

And have thought wrongly of Allah as the thought of the pre-Islamic people.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 4

4. ﴿فَلَمۡ تَجِدُواْ مَآءٗ فَتَيَمَّمُواْ صَعِيدٗا طَيِّبٗا﴾. (النساء: 43).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 4

1. And you find no water, perform Tayammum with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 274).
2. Ye find no water, then go to high clean soil. (Pickthall, 81).
3. And if find no water, Then take for yourselves clean sand or earth. (Ali, 194)

INTERPRETATION:

Fatayamamu فتيمموا Ibn Manzoor did not tackle this term, whereas Al-nasafy (2000, 229) says that Al-tayamum التيمم means touching the earth's surface whether soil or other than that.

Al-shawkani (1994, vol. I, 596) says that Al-tayamum التيمم means rubbing the face and the hands with soil.

Ibn katheer (1990, vol, I, 479) states that Tayamamu تيمموا means "clean smooth soil".

COMMENTS:

Al-hilaly and Khan have translated Al-tayamum التيمم phonologically, so it is impossible for the English readers to understand this term, which does not exist in their culture.

Pickthall and Ali have also fallen victim to a serious pitfall because they have not clarified the mechanism of this process to the English reader.

In our view, Al-tayamum التيمم means to perform ablution and purify the face and hands with clean soil.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

And if you find no water, perform ablution with clean soil.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 5

5. ﴿وَمَآ أَكَلَ ٱلسَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيۡتُمۡ﴾. (المائدة: 3).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 5

1. And that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal – unless you slaughter it (before its death). (Al-hilaly and Khan, 162).
2. And the devoured of wild beasts saving that which ye make lawful (by the death-stroke). (Pickthall, 101).
3. That which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal, unless you are able to slaughter it (in due form). (Ali, 240)

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn- manzoor (W.D, vol-I, 1073) Thakaytum ذكيتم means what is saved alive, while Al-nasafy (2000,272) states that Thakaytum ذكيتم means: except what can you slaughter and it is about to die, but Al-shawkani (1994, vol-II, 10) says that "Al-thakah الذكاة" according to Arab tongue means "to slaughter".

Ibn kathir (1990, vol-II, 11) states that Thakaytum ذكيتم means: except what you slaughter from those when it is still live.

COMMENTS:

Thakaytum ذكيتم means: to slaughter an animal for eating, but not any animal, the animal which is saved alive from a predator.

All the translators have captured the meaning.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

And what is eaten by a predator, except what is saved alive and slaughtered legally.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 6

6. ﴿وَظَلَّلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلۡغَمَٰمَ وَأَنزَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلۡمَنَّ وَٱلسَّلۡوَىٰۖ﴾. (الأعراف: 160)

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 6

1. We shaded them with the clouds and sent down upon Al-Manna and the quail. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 248).
2. And we caused the white clouds to overshadow them and sent down for them the manna and the quails.(Pickthall, 162).
3. We gave them the shadow of clouds, And sent down to them manna and quails. (Ali, 390).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn-manzoor (W.D, vol. II, 1020), Al-ghamam الغمام means white clouds which cover the sky and conceal it, while Al-nasafy (2000, 391) believes that "وظللنا عليهم الغمام" means we have shadowed them in their homelessness. However, Al-shawkani (1994, vol. II, 326) says that: we had shadowed them in their homelessness where ever they go.

Ibn kathir (1990, vol-II, 246) says that this term means: shadowing them with clouds then protecting them from sunlight.

COMMENTS:

Al-hilaly and Khan have translated Al-ghamam الغمام into clouds only, but, what kind of clouds?. These clouds which had been sent by Allah were shadowing only, so they have not hit the meaning.

Pickthall has hit the target.

Ali has not achieved equivalency because he translated this term into clouds without any modification.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

And we had shaded them with white clouds and sent them down the honey-dew (dew produced by a certain genus of aphid) and quails.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 7

7. ﴿وَإِذْ نَتَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظُلَّةٌ﴾. (الأعراف: 171).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 7

1. And (remember) when we raised the mountain over them as if it had been a canopy. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 251).
2. When we shook the mount above them as it were a canopy. (Pickthall, 164).
3. When we shook the mount over them, as if it had been a canopy. (Ali, 393).

INTERPRETATION:

Nataqa al-jabala نتق الجبل according to Ibn manzoor (W.D, vol. III, 576) means: uprooting and raising the mountain, while Al-nasafy (2000, 394) says: uprooting and raising it, but Al-shawkani (1994, vol. II, 334) says: raising the mountain. So did Ibn kathir (1990, vol. II, 250).

COMMENTS:

Nataqa نتق" means uprooting and raising a mountain, but not anything else.

Al-hilaly and Khan have depicted the meaning perfectly, whereas Pickthall and Ali have failed in finding the right translation because "shook" does not mean raise.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

And we had uprooted the mountain, then raised it above them to be as its shadow.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 8

8. ﴿يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْأَنفَالِ﴾. (الأنفال: 1).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 8

1. They ask you (Oh Muhammad) (ص) about the spoils of the war. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 393).
2. They ask thee (O Muhammad) of the spoils of war. (Pickthall, 169).
3. They ask thee concerning (Things taken as) spoils of war. (Ali, 415).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, Vol. III, 695), Alanfal الأنفال means the spoils which were forbidden and then Allah legalized them, but Al-nasafy (2000, 403) says that it means "the spoil", while Al shawkani (1994, Vol. II, 361) states that it means "the spoil". Ibn kathir (1990, Vol.II, 272) states its meaning as the "acquisitions that were obtained by the Muslims during war".

COMMENTS:

Al-anfal الأنفال means any legal spoil which is obtained during the war only, so any spoil which is obtained by another way is not called Nafl نفل . All the translators have successfully translated the term.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

They ask you about the spoils of the war.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 9

9. ﴿إِنَّمَا ٱلنَّسِيٓءُ زِيَادَةٞ فِي ٱلۡكُفۡرِۖ﴾. (التوبة: 37).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 9

1. The postponing (of a sacred Month) is indeed an addition to disbelief. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 277).
2. Postponement (of a sacred month) is only an excess of disbelief. (Pickthall, 184).
3. Verily the transposing (of prohibited month) is an addition to unbelief. (Ali, 451).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn manzoor (W.D, vol.III, 632) Al-nasee' النَّسِيْء means: anything which is forgotten, while Al-nasafy (2000, 435) states its meaning as: delaying the sacred month to the next one, whereas Al-shawkani (1994, vol.II, 459) says that it means: to extend the month, but Ibn kathir (1990, vol.II, 141) explained it as: to leave the sacred month one year then to legalize it the next year.

COMMENTS:

Al-nasee' النَّسِيْء means: to delay the lunar sacred month sine die. This term is used to extend or delay a lunar sacred month only, but not anything else.

All the translators should have distinguished between the lunar and solar month.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

The delaying of the lunar sacred month is an excess in disbelief.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 10

10. ﴿إِنَّمَا ٱلصَّدَقَٰتُ لِلْفُقَرَآءِ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ وَٱلْعَٰمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَٱلْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِى ٱلرِّقَابِ وَٱلْغَٰرِمِينَ﴾.
(التوبة: 60).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 10

1. As-sadaqat (here it means Zakat) are only for Fuqara (poor), and al-Masakin (the poor) and those employed to collect (the funds), and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (toward Islam) and to free the captives; and for those in debt. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 281).

2. The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors. (Pickthall, 187).

3. Alms for the poor and the needy and those employed to administer the (funds), For those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (To truth); for those in bondage and in debt. (Ali, 458).

INTERPRETATION:

Al-gharim الغارم according to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol.II., 981) means: the one who can not pay the owing debt, while Al-nasafy (2000, 444) states its meaning as: the people who are burdened with debts to others. Whereas Al-shawkani (1994, vol.II, 477) says that it means: the indebted people who can not repay their debts. So did Ibn kathir.

COMMENTS:

Al-gharim الغارم is the bankrupt person who can not pay his owing debt. All the translators have failed in finding the correct expression for "Al-gharim الغارم" because they have mentioned the debtors without modifying what kind of debtors they are! This leads the English reader to misunderstand the matter.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

The Alms – giving should be offered to the poor, beggars, those who collect these alms, those who embraced Islam recently, to set free the slaves and for the bankrupt debtors.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 11

11. ﴿ هُوَ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ ٱلشَّمۡسَ ضِيَآءً وَٱلۡقَمَرَ نُورًا ﴾. (يونس: 5).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 11

1. It is who he made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 298).
2. He it is who appointed the sun as a splendour and the moon a light. (Pickthall, 198).
3. It is who he made the sun to be shining glory And the moon to be a light. (Ali, 484 – 485).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol.II, 555) Al-diya' الضياء means: the light which emanates from an original source. Al-noor النور according to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol. III, 739) means: to lighten the place, while Al nasafy (2000, 463) says that "Al-diya' الضياء" is stronger than Al-noor and left the meaning of Al-diya' الضياء , but Al-shawkani (1994, vol.II, 542) states that "Al-diya' الضياء" is in the core and Al-noor النور is not in the core, whereas Ibn kathir (1990, vol.II, 389) says that "Al-diya' الضياء" means the ray which emanates from the sun and Al-noor النور is another matter.

COMMENTS:

The term "Al-diya' الضياء" denotes the light which emanates from an original source, Al-noor النور denotes the reflected light. All the translators have not succeeded in finding the appropriate expression of "Al-diya' الضياء" and Al-noor النور because they have used synonyms only (light and splendour).

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

It is he who had created the sun as a source of light and the moon as a reflector.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 12

12. ﴿سُبۡحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَسۡرَىٰ بِعَبۡدِهِۦ لَيۡلٗا مِّنَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡأَقۡصَا﴾. (الإسراء: 1).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 12

1. Glorified (and exalted) is he (Allah) (above all that) (evil) they associate with him) (Tafsir Qutubi) who took his slave (Muhammad) for a journey by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haram (at Makkah) to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa (in Jerusalem). (Al-hilaly and Khan, 400).

2. Glorified be He who carried his servant by night from the inviolable place of warship to the far distance place of warship. (Pickthall, 278).

3. Glory to (God) who did take his servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque. (Ali, 693).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol. II, 141) “Sara سرى” means: “to walk at night”, while Al-nasafy (2000, 615) states its meaning as: travel at night. Al-shawkani (1994, vol. III, 356) also states its meaning as: to walk at night, but Ibn Kathir (1990, vol. III, 3) says that) “Sara سرى” means: to travel in darkness.

COMMENTS:

The term “Sara سرى” means: to travel at night. All the translators have achieved equivalency.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

Glory to Allah who took his slave worshipper for a journey at night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 13

13. ﴿وَمِن وَرَآئِهِم بَرۡزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوۡمِ يُبۡعَثُونَ﴾. (المؤمنون: 100).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 13

1. And behind them is Barzakh (barrier) until the day when they resurrected. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 498).
2. And behind them is a barrier until the day when they are raised. (Picthall, 356).
3. Before them is a Partition Till the day they are raised up. (Ali, 891).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol. I, 193) "Barzakh برزخ" means: the period from death to doomsday, while Al Nasafy (2000, 765) says that "Barzakh برزخ" means: the barrier which prevents the dead from returning to the previous state of life and Al shawkani (1994, vol. III, 619) states its meaning as: "the barrier between death and Resurrection day", while Ibn kathir (1990, vol. III, 248) illustrates that "Barzakh برزخ" means: "the barrier between the present life and the judgment day".

COMMENTS:

"Barzakh برزخ" means: "the period of time which separates between the death and the Resurrection day" .

Al hilaly and Khan have translated the term "Barzakh برزخ" and explained it by the term barrier which is an incorrect equivalence. Pickthall has not succeeded in his task because he used the term barrier, so did Ali by using the term partition which is a synonym to the term barrier. Consequently, all the translator have not captured the right translation.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

And behind them, a period of time until the Resurrection day.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 14

14. ﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِذَا نَكَحۡتُمُ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنَٰتِ ثُمَّ طَلَّقۡتُمُوهُنَّ مِن قَبۡلِ أَن تَمَسُّوهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِنَّ مِنۡ عِدَّةٖ﴾. (الأحزاب: 49).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 14

1. O you who believe! When you marry believing women and then divorce them before you have sexual intercourse with them, no Iddah. (Al- hilaly and Khan, 605).
2. Oye believe ! If you wed believing women and divorce them before you have touched them, then there is no period that Ye should reckon. (Pickthall, 447).
3. O ye believe ! When you marry believing women and then divorce them before You have touched them, no period of Iddah Have ye to count. (Ali, 1121).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol. II, 703) “Iddah عدة” means: the legal period in which the divorced woman should wait until getting married again, while Al-nasafy (2000, 945) states that “Iddah عدة” means: to calculate the legal period of a divorced woman, which she has to spend before getting married again. Al shawkani (1994, vol. IV, 363) agrees so too. Ibn kathir (1990, vol. III, 479) illustrates that “Iddah عدة” means: the divorced woman should wait for four months and ten days before getting married again.

COMMENTS:

“Iddah عدة” denotes the period between the beginning of the divorce of a woman with her husband until being sure that she is not pregnant from her ex-husband in order to marry again. Al hilaly and Khan have achieved the proper meaning because they did not define “Iddah عدة” even briefly. Pickthall has approached the meaning but partially, because he did not determine the duration of “Iddah عدة” . Ali also did not determine the duration of “Iddah عدة” .

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

Oh, believers, if you marry believing women, but divorce them before any intercourse, you have not to wait against them four months and ten days(1).

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 15

15. ﴿ مُدْهَآمَّتَانِ ٦٤ ﴾. (الرحمن: 64).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 15

1. Dark green (in colour). (Al - hilaly and Khan, 768).
2. Dark green with foliage. (Pickhall, 593).
3. Dark – green in colour (From plentiful watering). (Ali, 1481).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn – Manzoor (W.D., vol. I, 1026) Mudhamatan مدهامتان means: black as a result of intensive greenness because of watering, while Al Nasafy (2000, 1197) states its meaning as: black as a result of intensive greenness, whereas Al shawkani (1994, vol. V, 166) illustrates its meaning as: being black as a result of greenness. Ibn kathir (1990, vol. IV, 281) says that its meaning is: being black as a result of greenness from plentiful watering.

COMMENTS:

Mudhamatan مدهامتان denotes such a colour which is blackish – green, no equivalents for this term in English. All the translators have translated the phrase correctly.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

Blackish – green in colour.

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(1) To be sure that their wombs are clear.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 16

16. ﴿أَوۡ زِدۡ عَلَيۡهِ وَرَتِّلِ ٱلۡقُرۡءَانَ تَرۡتِيلًا ٤﴾. (المزمل: 4).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 16

1. And recite the Quran (aloud) in a slow (pleasant tone) style. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 830).
2. And chant the Quran in measure. (Pickthall, 661).
3. And recite the Qur-an in slow measured rhythmic tones. (Ali, 1633).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol. I, 1120) the term “Rattil رتل” means reading the glorious Quran carefully, deliberately and clarifying the diacritics, while Al nasafy (2000, 1292) says that “Rattil رتل” means: reading the glorious Quran deliberately showing the diacritics and pauses. Al-shawkani (1994, vol. 393) and Ibn kathir (1990, vol. IV, 435) also agree.

COMMENTS:

All the translators have not conveyed the idea at all because “Rattil رتل” means: reading the glorious Quran following the legal Arabic linguistic rules. (see Othman, 1974)

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

And do read the Quran (following the legal Arabic linguistic rules).

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 17

17. ﴿وَإِذَا ٱلۡمَوۡءُۥدَةُ سُئِلَتۡ ٨ بِأَيِّ ذَنۢبٖ قُتِلَتۡ ٩﴾. (التكوير: 9,8).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 17

1. And when the female (infant) buried alive (as the pagan Arab used to do) is questioned (8) for which sin was she killed?. (Al-hilaly and Khan, 853).

2. And when the girl – child that was buried alive is asked (8) for what sin she was slain. (Pickthall, 689).
3. When the female (infant) Buried alive, is questioned (8) for what crime she was killed. (Ali, 1694).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol. III, 164) "Al-mawodah الموؤدة" means: when a man in the pre-Islamic period received a female in birth, he was accustomed to burying her, while Al nasafy (2000, 1329) states its meaning as: the alive-buried female, but, Al shawkani (1994, vol. 484) says that this term means: the alive – buried female (to avoid shame and poverty). Ibn kathir (1990, vol. IV, 478) illustrates its meaning as: (the newly birth – female who was buried by the pre-Islamic people as a matter of hate).

COMMENTS:

According to our view, all the translators have hit the translated the passage correctly.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

And when alive infant female was questioned (8) for which sin she was killed (9).

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 18

.18 ﴿وَيۡلٞ لِّلۡمُطَفِّفِينَ ١﴾. (المطففين: 1).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 18

1. Woe to Al-Mutaffifun (those who give less in measure and weight). (Al-hilaly and Khan, 857).
2. Woe unto the defrauders. (Pickthall, 694).
3. Woe to those That dealt in fraud. (Ali, 1703).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol.II, 598) “Al-tatfeef التطفيف” means: decreasing off either the measure or the weight for cheating one’s fellows, while Al nasafy (2000, 1329) says that “Al-muttaffifeen المطففين” means: those who deceive people in measure and weight, whereas Al shawkani (1994, vol. V, 495) says that Al-muttaffif المطفف is the one who cheats his fellows by decreasing the measure and or the weight, on the other hand, Ibn kathir (1990, vol. IV, 485) illustrates that Al-muttaffif المطفف means: the one who increases the measure and the weight in selling and decreases them in buying.

COMMENTS:

Al-hilaly and Khan have adopted phonological translation. So they are incorrect because they did not succeed in conveying the meaning of this term. Pickthall and Ali have failed in their task also because they have not modified the two terms (defrauders and fraud).

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

Woe to those who increase the weight and measure when they sell and decrease the weight and measure when they buy.

SOURCE LANGUAGE TEXT 19

19. ﴿إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ ٱلْأَبْتَرُ ٣﴾. (الكوثر: 3).

TARGET LANGUAGE TEXTS 19

1. For he hates you (O Muhammad) he will be cut off (from posterity and every good thing in this word and in the Hereafter). (Al-hilaly and Khan, 888).
2. Lo! It is thy insulter (and not thou) who is without posterity. (Pickthall, 735).
3. For who he hateth thee – He will cut - off (From further hope). (Ali, 1378).

INTERPRETATION:

According to Ibn Manzoor (W.D, vol. III, 595) “Al-abtar الأبتر” means: the sonless man, while Al nasafy (2000, 1378) states that “Al-abtar الأبتر” means: the man who does not do goodness at all, whereas Al shawkani (1994, vol. V, 635) and Ibn kathir (1990, vol. IV, 563) states that “Al-abtar الأبتر” means: the sonless man.

COMMENTS:

“Al-abtar الأبتر” means: the man who has daughters only rather than sons. Al hilaly and Khan and Pickthall have used the term posterity which means: the descendants of males and females which is not equivalent to the term “Al-abtar الأبتر”. They have not offered the accurate culture for the English reader. Ali also did not convey the idea because he has translated “Al-abtar الأبتر” into “hopeless” which does not coincide the term “Al-abtar الأبتر” .

PROPOSED TRANSLATION:

Oh, Muhammad, the one who hates you is the sonless (or being the sonless).

Note: the term sonless comprises two morphemes, the free morpheme (son) and bounded morpheme (-less) which denotes negation.

CONCLUSION:

After reading and assimilating the previous terms related to oligosemy, which are found in the translated context of the chosen holy verses, we elicit the following:

1. The translator of the religious texts should focus on the meaning, i.e. he should not translate the texts literally.
2. The translators of the texts discussed in this study have mostly dealt with the surface structure of the holy verses and neglected the deep meanings.

3. Some of the oligosemic terms have been translated phonologically; therefore, they have done nothing in this area.
4. Sometimes we have observed that the translators in this study have translated the holy verses without recognizing their meanings.
5. Oftentimes, the message that we receive from the translators in this study can not be understood by the English receivers.
6. As a result of our study, we conclude that the translators in this study have relied upon unreliable authorities, which serves to mislead the receivers.
7. All the terms that we have selected (Itamarah اعتمر Nunshizuha ننشزها , Al-jahiliyah الجاهلية , Fatayamamu فتيمموا Thakaytum ذكيتم , Al-ghamam الغمام , Nataqa نتق , Al-anfal الأنفال , Al-nasee’ النَّسِيْءْ, Al-gharim الغارم , Al-diya’ الضياء, Al-noor النور , Sara سرى , Barzakh برزخ , Iddah عدة, Mudhamatan مدهامتان , Rattil رتل , Al-maw’oodah المؤودة , Al-tatfeef التطفيف and Al-abtar الأبتر) have no equivalents in English and denote oligosemy.
8. The translators of the glorious Quran should be well – educated native speakers; otherwise, no perfect message can be achieved.
9. Actually, the translation of the holy verses is a very difficult task, even for the well-educated native speakers. What’s about the foreigners? I would like to thank the foreign translators very much because they have achieved a big task which should have been done by us (as native Arabic speakers).
10. The translators of any text should focus on two important matters: the meaning and the rhetorical effect.

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بعض المشاكل في ترجمة
مصطلحات قرآنية لا مرادف لها في اللغة الإنجليزية

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الخلاصة

تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على ظاهرة عدم توفر معاني إنجليزية مرادفة لمصطلحات في اللغة العربية. فتتناول هذه الظاهرة من خلال آيات من القرآن الكريم. وتشتمل الدراسة على أربعة أقسام. فيحتوي القسم الأول على الخلاصة. والقسم الثاني يتضمن المقدمة، فيما يتناول القسم الثالث تحليلاً ونقاشاً لنصوص معينة، ثم تأتي الخاتمة في القسم الرابع. وقد أُفرِدَ قسم في نهاية الدراسة يتضمن المراجع.